POLICE RESPONSIVENESS

THE OUTCOME
Minimize damage to life and property and increase probability of criminal apprehension with a fast patrol response.

THE MEASUREMENT
All calls are assigned a priority. The determination of a call's priority depends on the severity of the crime and the time frame in which it occurred. There is a priority assigned to each crime code within the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system but the dispatcher has the option to upgrade a call's priority based on what the caller says or what the dispatcher may hear. The response time is the time it takes from the time the call is received to when the first police unit arrives on scene and can be broken down into two components – the time it takes to take and dispatch the call, and the officer travel time.

Priority 1 calls are life and death emergencies such as all violent crimes in progress, some non-violent crimes in progress, armed robbery alarms, injury or no detail traffic collisions, and burglaries in progress. Other examples include kidnapping, domestic violence, or assault in progress. Priority one calls are generally less than two percent of the total police call volume.

Priority 2 calls include non-violent crimes in progress such as petty theft and burglary alarms.

Priority 3 calls include "cold" reports - reports being taken after the crime has occurred. Examples include coming home and finding that your house was burglarized earlier in the day or waking in the morning and discovering that your car has been stolen.

Priority 4 calls are miscellaneous calls that generally are not citizen-initiated and may not result in a citizen interaction. Examples include a request for an officer to make a phone call or a request for extra patrol in a certain area.

A new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system was installed in May 2005, and provides a more accurate measure of calls for service than in years past. The previous CAD system response time measurement included both citizen calls and officer-initiated calls. Officer-initiated calls generally have a response time of zero since the officer reports the call at the same time he is

on-scene. The new CAD system breaks out the citizen calls for service so the response time is a more accurate reflection of our responsiveness to our citizens. With 18 months of new data available, it is now possible to make some response time comparisons between 2005 and 2006.

WHAT THE DATA MEANS

Most customers report that they believe response time reflects quality of service. As a result, response time is often a large factor in a customer's satisfaction rating. We have numerous data indicating that fast response times are very important to the customer. In actuality, response times are a reflection of not only quality of service but also other factors such as traffic circulation, staffing, and overall activity levels. Since priority one calls are only two percent of the total police call volume, the response times for priorities two and three are also examined because they are key to customer satisfaction as they reflect the majority of our citizen interactions.

DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
Police

BENCHMARK

The FY 2004 ICMA (International City Managers Association) mean average priority one response time was 6.1 minutes for cities under 100,000 population (ICMA FY 05 data pending). Carlsbad has used the benchmarks of 6, 15, and 30 minutes for priorities 1, 2, and 3 respectively for many years. Since ICMA has no benchmark for the other priorities and Carlsbad believes that our responsiveness to calls other than priority 1 is an important customer service measure and workload indicator, the police department is presenting both internal and ICMA benchmarks. In addition, Carlsbad is looking at the percentage of calls by priority where response time is less than the benchmark. Priority 2 and 3 calls made up almost 83% of all calls in 2006.

RESULTS

Priority	ICMA Benchmark	Carlsbad Jan – Dec. 22 2006	Carlsbad Benchmark	% of Calls at Benchmark or Better
1	6.1 mins.	5.9 mins	90% <6.0	61%
2	N/A	13.4 mins	90% <15.0	72%
3	N/A	26.7 mins	90% <30.0	73%

Priority	May – Dec. 2005 % of Calls at Benchmark or Better	Jan – Dec. 22, 2006 % of Calls at Benchmark or Better
1	54.7%	60.6%
2	70.3%	72.4%
3	73.7%	73.1%

Note: 2005 data begins in May with installation of new CAD system.

ANALYSIS

The average priority 1 response time is slightly better than the ICMA average and the internal goal of 6.0 minutes. However when the distribution of response times is examined, only 61% of the priority one calls are responded to in 6 minutes or less. Priorities 2 and 3 are slightly better at 72% and 73% respectively.

Compared to the previous year, improvements were made in all three priorities. This was due to improvements made on both the dispatch time and the travel time for all three priorities. For example, the priority 1 dispatch time improved from 2.7 minutes in 2005 to 2.5 minutes in 2006. The travel time for the same period improved from 4.2 minutes in 2005 to 3.9 minutes in 2006.

Many factors impact response time including staffing, beat allocation, beat familiarization, traffic circulation, and the use of technology. Some of the improvements seen are most likely due to better use of and familiarity with the new computer-aided dispatch system and its mapping component.

ACTION PLAN

Response time will continue to be closely monitored on a monthly basis. The police beats were realigned with the new CAD system and response time by beat will be closely monitored to assure that geographic deployment is maximized for response time.

The police department will study ways to increase the percentage of calls meeting the benchmarks for average response time.

POINT OF CONTACT Fiona Everett, Management Analyst, 760-931-2279, fever@ci.carlsbad.ca.us